



SC Department of Employment and Workforce STATEMENT

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S.C. Leaders Unveiling Be Pro Be Proud SC at Farmers Market to Begin Statewide Tour

Unique Mobile Workshop Will Travel the State to Highlight Skilled Jobs

Be Pro Be Proud SC is unlike anything South Carolina has experienced, and on Thursday September 3, 2020, Gov. Henry McMaster and public and private leaders will unveil the impressive 53-foot, double-expandable, 18-wheel window to the future.

Kicking off its statewide tour this fall, the mission of Be Pro Be Proud SC is to showcase skilled-profession careers abundantly found in South Carolina through hands-on, interactive stations representing on-the-job experiences. The movement aims to bring a new generation of pride and professionals to the state's skilled workforce, specifically among the student populations who are weighing their options after graduation. Students will learn that many of these skilled jobs are not only high-paying, but in demand, have long-term career prospects and are only a fraction of the cost of a 4-year degree.

"The Be Pro Be Proud SC initiative motivates and arms hardworking South Carolinians with knowledge of lucrative employment opportunities," said Gov. Henry McMaster. "This initiative not only creates a stronger, more skilled workforce, but builds pathways for South Carolinians to achieve their very own American dream," says South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster.

Inside, visitors will experience hands-on module simulators for forklift operation, commercial driving, utility bucket operation, diesel technology, heavy equipment operation, welding, carpentry and construction technology, and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine operation. In addition to the hands on simulations, visitors will walk away with training resources and what it takes to start a skilled professional career. The 2020-2021 tour will cover the state visiting schools, fairs, career centers, conventions and government events.

"Now more than ever, finding meaningful work that can withstand economic downfall, including a pandemic, is critical for many South Carolina families. The jobs built into this interactive experience are important to the state's economy and provide exposure to skilled-based careers that students may not have considered. Understanding the salaries, benefits and long-term stability tied to these essential functions will help individuals evaluate their career options," said S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce Executive Director, Dan Ellzey.

Due to an aging workforce in skilled-labor careers, it is estimated that 2 million jobs will be left unfilled by 2025, creating a massive demand that needs to be addressed. And while the Be Pro Be Proud SC was planned long before the pandemic began, COVID-19 has significantly increased the demand on "essential" fields like transportation and logistics, utilities, construction, and diesel technology. According to statistics from the US Department of Labor, the number of jobs available in these sectors are projected to increase by as much as 25% over the next decade in South Carolina.



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“Essential industries like the kind that build, grow, make, and move things have relied on skilled professionals since the dawn of commerce,” says Rick Todd, President and CEO of the South Carolina Trucking Association. “We are proud to take this experiential show on the road so curious folks can see and learn about the career opportunities in these accessible, much-needed industry sectors. It’s an innovative public-private partnership that’s been years in the making, but one that will help accelerate the move from school to a good job and meaningful career.”

The idea for this mobile workshop comes from the state of Arkansas where *Be Pro Be Proud* was created in 2016. More than 98,000 individuals participated in the 540-stop tour that spanned 285 cities. South Carolina became the first state to partner with Arkansas to launch a mobile workshop and workforce development project like this.

Media partners are invited to join South Carolina leaders at the SC State Farmers Market at 3483 Charleston Highway on September 3, 2020 at 10 a.m. for an official launch event. Media will be able to walk through the Be Pro Be Proud mobile workshop, take pictures, ask questions and find out more about how this initiative will help South Carolina’s students become the state’s proud workforce. This event is a press opportunity only and not open to the public.

For more information, visit the Be Pro Be Proud SC website at <https://www.beprobeproudsc.org/>.

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About Be Pro Be Proud SC:

The Be Pro Be Proud SC project was created to close the gap between job seekers and employers’ needs for a qualified workforce. Taking a unique, targeted approach to removing the stigma from “blue-collar” jobs, its goal is to educate students and the public on the appeal and the importance of these jobs for our economy.

Be Pro Be Proud SC is made possible through a public-private collaboration of leaders of the Associated Industries of South Carolina Foundation (AISCF) and the Department of Employment & Workforce (DEW), and other state education, workforce, and economic development agencies. Capital to build the mobile workshop and provide the job simulators comes from the private sector. DEW and other public sectors will fund the campaign’s operation.

The Associated Industries of South Carolina Foundation (AISCF) consists of five member organizations that are launching Be Pro Be Proud SC. AISCF consists of: The South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, The South Carolina Trucking Association, Carolinas AGC, Home Builders Association of South Carolina, and The Forestry Association of South Carolina.

About the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce is putting South Carolinians to work. The agency has four missions: (1) workforce development; (2) free job match employment services; (3) unemployment insurance; and (4) labor market information. All four missions contribute to workforce development. The agency is dedicated to advancing South Carolina through services and programs that meet the needs of our businesses, jobseekers and those looking to advance their careers.